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February 27, 2013

Testimony in support of H.B. 6003, An ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR THE EXPANSION OF A RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME IN NEW HAVEN.

Honorable Co-Chairmen, Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee;

My name is State Representative Roland Lemar and I am here before you to testify in favor of House Bill 6003, AN ACT AUTHORIZING BONDS OF THE STATE FOR THE EXPANSION OF A RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME IN NEW HAVEN.

This bill, if enacted, would provide much needed funding to expand the Leeway Resident Facility which serves individuals with HIV/AIDS in New Haven. The funding would expand the number of beds by sixty through the addition of residential care homes. New Haven's population of people living with HIV/AIDS is disproportionately high when comparing with other areas of Connecticut. According to the Department of Public Health's Epidemiologist Report, there are approximately 1500 people living with HIV infection in New Haven. Expanding this facility to include the Residential Care Homes would assist many individuals with HIV/AIDS who otherwise would have to burden the emergency room in a year when our hospital funding will likely be cut in the budget.

It is known that many of the Leeway Resident Facility's current and former patients struggle with homelessness. Most of these people have non-existent social support. They have trouble surviving outside of structured environments, in which they get the care they need.

The bill before you aims to prepare these patients for independent living. By providing a wide array of services would assist them in re-adapting to life outside of Leeway's walls. In addition to that, it is estimated that expansion of this facility would save taxpayers' money since the costs

would be offset by program savings to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Energy Assistance and housing subsidy programs, and it would lessen the burden on the local hospitals. Please see attached Leeway Proposed RCH Bonding Fact Sheet.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roland Lemar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Roland Lemar
State Representative

Leeway Proposed RCH Bonding Fact Sheet

Proposal to Expand Leeway Resident Capacity

Leeway is a forty bed nursing facility serving individuals with HIV/AIDS in New Haven. Leeway is seeking to expand its total beds to sixty through the addition of a residential care homes (RCH). The facility would be renovated at a cost of \$5 million .

Need for Residential Care Home Beds

Leeway was approved by the legislature 19 years ago as a demonstration project under Skilled nursing regulations. Leeway Residents average age is 50 years. The average age of the traditional nursing home resident is 75. The residents are very sick but not all of them are wheel chair bound and many have the desire and need to move about. Based on Leeway's experience with referrals and feedback concerning placement challenges from HIV/AIDS service providers in the region, the residential care home would be highly utilized and contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the health care system. The project would meet the residential and support service needs of a portion of the individuals in the greater New Haven area with HIV/AIDS.

Many of Leeway's current and former patients struggle with homelessness, may have alienated friends and family members resulting in limited or non-existent social support systems, and have not developed the necessary life skills to successfully live on their own. This population cannot live outside of a structured environment without support for activities of daily living such as nutrition, hygiene and medication oversight. Without structures over sight and care the resident quickly decompensates and returned to the hospital sicker then the last visit. Currently, there are thirteen RCH facilities in located in the New Haven area with a total of 364 licensed beds. Based on 2011 cost report information, the average occupancy rate for the thirteen facilities exceeds 96% and many homes in the area do not admit individuals with HIV/AIDS.

The proposed addition of thirty RCH beds aims at preparing individuals for a productive, responsible, and independent life through a three pronged, integrative approach by providing: (1) medical oversight; (2) intensive social services/case management; and (3) educational/life building skills. Each resident will have the opportunity to work with social services to create an individualized plan which will support the resident to achieve his or her goal to move on to a successful independent living in the community.

Cost Savings of the Residential Care Home

Residential Care Home cost per day \$150 ,Skilled Nursing Care cost per day \$350, Hospital Low Cost per day \$1,000. It is anticipated that Leeway RCH services will reduce hospital, nursing facility and substance abuse treatment facility utilization by the target population. RCH services are expected to improve the over-all health of individuals and, most importantly, increase medication adherence. In addition, taxpayer costs associated with RCH services will be offset by program savings to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Energy Assistance and housing subsidy programs, as these needs will be met by the RCH.